

NOTES AND NEWS.

GEORGE B. SENNETT, an Active Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his home in Youngstown, Ohio, March 18, 1900, at the age of 59 years. Mr. Sennett was born in Sinclairville, N. Y., July 28, 1840, and for many years had been a prominent manufacturer of oil-well machinery and engines, with his place of business formerly at Meadville, Pa., and later at Youngstown, Ohio. Although an active business man, he was, nevertheless, an enthusiastic ornithologist, and for a number of years was able to devote considerable periods to field work and more or less time to original research in systematic ornithology. His special field of investigation was the Lower Rio Grande region of Texas, and his collection of Texas birds and birds' nests and eggs was the most extensive and most carefully selected and prepared ever brought together. His collection also includes many birds from northeastern Mexico, and a fair representation of the birds of North America at large. For many years this collection has been at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where it has been of great service to the Museum, and has always been accessible to ornithologists desiring to make use of it.

His ornithological writings relate mainly to the birds of Texas, beginning with his 'Notes on the Ornithology of the Lower Rio Grande of Texas,' published in 1878, and his 'Further Notes on the Ornithology of the Lower Rio Grande of Texas,' published in 1879. In 1887 and during several following years his contributions to ornithological literature were frequent and important, his work being marked by keen insight, care and thoroughness. Later he became more deeply engrossed in business, but lost none of his interest in birds, and looked eagerly forward to an early retirement, when he would be free to devote his time to ornithological pursuits, including the completion of a long-projected illustrated work on the birds of Texas, on the preparation of which he had already spent much time and money. He was actively interested in the protection of birds, and for several years was chairman of the A. O. U. Bird Protection Committee. From 1887 to 1889 he was President of the Linnæan Society of New York, to whose interests he was ever heartily devoted. He was genial, generous, kind-hearted and conscientious, and will be greatly missed by those who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.

In accordance with a standing order of the Union respecting deceased Active Members (see *Auk*, XII, p. 199), a special memorial of his life and work will be presented at the next meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union, and published later in '*The Auk*.'

WILLIAM EDWIN BROOKS, a Corresponding Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his residence, Mount Forest, Ontario, on January 18, 1899, at the age of 70 years. He was the son of W. A. Brooks, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, and was born in 1829. His father was chief engineer on the Tyne docks and harbor works, where for several years young Brooks was employed as his father's assistant. In 1856 he went to India as a civil engineer on the East India Railway, and was one of the original constructors of that line. In 1881 he came to Canada, and settled at Milton, Ontario, but later moved to Chilliwack, British Columbia, returning again to Ontario in 1891, and resided during his later years at Mount Forest.

His ornithological work related almost entirely to India birds; he was an active co-worker with Mr. Allan Hume, and from 1873 to 1880 published many papers on India birds in 'Stray Feathers,' in the 'Journal' of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and in 'The Ibis.' He gave particular attention to the smaller Warblers, and was a special authority on the genus *Phylloscopus*, of which he discovered several new species. One of his latest contributions to 'The Ibis' related to this group. He also devoted considerable attention to the Raptores, closely studying the change of plumage in the smaller Eagles, which he kept alive for this purpose. His large collection of Indian birds is now in the British Museum. He was elected a Corresponding Member of the A. O. U. in 1886, and became a member of the B. O. U. in 1892. His son, Allan Brooks, is a well-known Canadian ornithologist.

FRANCIS C. BROWNE, an Associate Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, and an occasional contributor to the 'Nuttall Bulletin,' 'The Auk,' and to 'Forest and Stream,' died at his home in Framingham, Mass., Jan. 9, 1900, aged 70.

In speaking of Mr. Browne we find little that he himself would think worth recording about his life; few of those things which deserve to be called events. He was a modest, shy, reserved man, who loved nature and the observation of nature, and shunned public notice as if it were infection. After his graduation at Harvard College (1851) he never attended the annual class meetings and, it is believed, never cared to revisit Cambridge. He never sought amusement outside of his own home, excepting only his annual visit to Clark's Island in Plymouth, for duck-shooting at the season of the autumnal migration. Although of most amiable and kindly temper and holding liberal views, he cared little for society or to make intimate acquaintance among his towns-people. He seldom went to Concord where he had passed his youth and was fitted for college, and where he had many attached friends and relatives. His chief delight and the occupation of his leisure hours was to arrange and catalogue his possessions in bird skins, shells and coins, upon which he spent a not inconsiderable amount of money, and to which he was constantly adding, by purchase or exchange, up to the last month of his life.

Mr. Browne was a born naturalist, and his mind was doubtless stimulated in his boyhood by the society of such men as Henry Thoreau, Channing, and Ralph Waldo Emerson (who married Mr. Browne's aunt), in Concord, and also by association with Dr. Charles T. Jackson, the discoverer of ether, who was his uncle.

While in college, he was soon made a member of the Harvard Natural History Society, and its Curator of Ornithology, and quickly became distinguished among his fellows by his work in arranging the cabinets of specimens and by his literary communications at the meetings of the society. He became, moreover, at about this time a frequent visitor at the rooms of the Boston Natural History Society, then in Mason St., Boston. To their collection he made some valuable gifts of birds shot by himself. He was also a frequent attendant at the meetings of this society, of which Dr. C. T. Jackson was President. Here he came to know such men as Agassiz, Jeffries Wyman, Gould, Storer, Bryant, Cabot, and others, and saw many of the distinguished naturalists of the time. Mr. Browne was also an early member of the Nuttall Ornithological Club of Cambridge, and of the American Ornithologists' Union.

In 1850 (his junior year), his health compelled him to give up study for a time and he went to Labrador, where he collected many birds among others a fine 'Labrador' or 'Black' Gyr Falcon, which he presented to the Boston Natural History Society. This bird, little known at that time, was the first of the species to be placed in the society's collection. It was largely through the influence of Mr. Browne that the first specimen known to have been certainly taken in Massachusetts of the Glossy Ibis was given to this society in 1850. His neat article on this subject, published in 'The Auk' for April, 1887, p. 97, tells the whole story. Mr. Browne had in his collection a unique specimen, a little Black Rail, so far as known the first of that species taken in New England, and still rarely found there. It was picked up dead on Clark's Island, Plymouth Harbor.

In the early spring of 1851, Mr. B. went to Florida where he joined Prof. Agassiz's party at Key West. He camped in the Everglades and upon the Miami River, and secured many, at that time, rare and valuable specimens.

Mr. Browne was, in his college days, an enthusiastic sportsman, and loved a dog and a gun and a solitary tramp in the woods above everything; and this love continued to the end of his life. With the instinct of a true sportsman and naturalist he recognized and drew to him all those who shared his tastes. So scrupulously did he avoid observation that few but the true ornithologist and mammalogist, or the expert in conchology, were aware of his knowledge in these departments, and they knew him chiefly by correspondence.

Throughout his college life he kept a diary which is especially rich in recounting his experiences as a hunter and collector. He gives a detailed

account of his trips to Labrador and Florida, and this journal has to-day for those who knew him and remember his old associates, a peculiar charm. Soon after he came to Framingham his journal ceases.

It was intended that he should study some profession, but his eyesight failing he was compelled to give up books and was advised to take a farm, and so began life in Framingham in 1853, and remained there until his death. In his domestic relations he seems to have been most fortunate and happy. He was a devoted son, and when married found his chief delight in the attractions of a pleasant, retired home among meadows, ponds, and woods. He married early a charming woman who appreciated his character and made his house attractive.

We know that when Mr. Browne was about ten or twelve years of age he was at Brook Farm under the tutelage of A. Bronson Alcott and living in his family. This early training and his attachment to Henry Thoreau may have had much to do with determining his tastes and the bent of his mind. His character was marked by a modest self-appreciation, a dislike of all show or pretence, a love of honest simplicity in living and thinking, and of all that is true and pure. He was always humble, charitable to the views of those who differed from him, apt to question the value of his own observations, seldom referring to his contributions to science. Simple and refined, he was always a gentleman and a scholar without pretending to the rôle of either. He had no coarse streaks about him; he had a discriminating taste in literature and loved music. We are indebted to him for many contributions to our knowledge of bird-life (migrations, habits, etc.), things which only patient, loving attention and study could enable any one observer to discover. He took pride in keeping abreast of modern ideas upon ornithology and nomenclature, and was a diligent reader of 'The Auk' and other journals of his favorite science.

Mrs. Browne outlived her husband but a few days leaving one child, a daughter. —Z. B. ADAMS.

JOHN A. DAKIN, an Associate Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died, after an illness of six days, at his home in Syracuse, N. Y., Feb. 21, 1900, at the age of 48 years. Mr. Dakin was born at Hillsdale, Columbia County, N. Y., in 1852, but when a small boy moved to Tully, N. Y., with his parents, where he received his first education in one of the district schools. He early manifested his love for birds, and later acquired a thorough knowledge of the birds of Onondaga County. In 1882 he went to Florida and hunted through the Everglades and along the Oklawaha River, collecting specimens and studying the birds of that region. He also gave much attention to the heronries, which were then innumerable on the brushy islands and shores of White Lake. After remaining in Florida four years he returned North, and fixed his home in Syracuse. In 1893 he took up the study of Lepidoptera, which he

pursued with equal enthusiasm with that of birds, and when he died had one of the largest collections of North American Lepidoptera in this section. He was a charter member and founder of the Onondaga Academy of Sciences, and contributed to it many valuable papers on the birds and insects of Onondaga County. He was a great advocate of bird protection, and read many papers on this subject before schools and other societies. He was gifted with a graceful pen, and his simplicity of style made his writings peculiarly attractive. He possessed a singularly attractive personality, which endeared him to all; and his honesty, modesty, and lofty principles won for him universal esteem.—A. W. PERIOR.

FOSTER H. BRACKETT, an Associate Member of the American Ornithologists' Union, died at his home in Dorchester, Mass., January 5, 1900, aged, 37 years. He was born in Fall River, Mass., but his parents removed to Roxbury, Mass., when he was a year old, where he received his education in the public schools and at a business college in Boston. When twenty years of age he entered the banking house of Blake Brothers & Co., Boston, with whom he remained till his death. Mr. Brackett was especially interested in the study of birds, to which all his leisure time was devoted, and had just acquired great familiarity with the birds of New England, of which he had made a considerable collection. His ornithological publications consisted of a few notes contributed from time to time to 'The Auk.' His many amiable traits of character had won for him a wide circle of friends. A widow, a son and two daughters survive him.

ON JANUARY 4, 1900, the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club celebrated the tenth anniversary of its organization. The meeting was held at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, the addresses being by Mr. Witmer Stone 'On the History of the Club,' and by Mr. Wm. L. Baily on 'Ornithological Photography.' Starting with a membership of seven in 1890, with the idea of making combined observations on bird migration in the Delaware Valley, the Club has grown to a membership of 88. Besides the establishment of regular bimonthly meetings, the organization has issued several publications, notably the 'Birds of Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey,' and has presented the Philadelphia Academy with an excellent local collection of birds and nests. It is now established on a firm basis, and it is to be hoped it will continue to increase the general interest in ornithology in Philadelphia and its vicinity, which it has been instrumental in arousing. Among the papers read during the year were the following: 'Probable Breeding of the Prothonotary Warbler in Delaware,' by W. Gordon Smith; 'The Heath Hen in Martha's Vineyard,' by H. L. Coggins; 'Glimpses of Bird Life in Mexico,' by S. N. Rhoads; 'Life and Habits of the Clapper Rail,' by I.

N. De Haven; 'Spring Flight of Shore Birds at Holly Beach, N. J.,' by W. L. Baily; 'History of the Little Black Hawk in Florida,' by C. J. Pennock. The officers for the ensuing year are: President, Charles J. Rhoads; Vice-President, Chas. J. Pennock; Secretary, Henry W. Fowler; Treasurer, Wm. L. Baily.

At a recent meeting of the State Horticultural Society of Illinois, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"*Whereas*, Great progress has been made in the last few years in our knowledge of the economic relations of the birds, and it is now known that the birds have a direct and important influence on horticulture; and that their presence in our orchards and fruit gardens is essential to the preservation of the crops from insects; therefore be it

"*Resolved*, That a better knowledge of the birds, of their effects on horticulture, their habits, the conditions governing their actions, methods of encouraging their presence and of protecting the fruits while ripening from their attacks ought to be spread among the people of our State; that this Society, therefore, urges the consideration of this question on our branch societies, our Farmers Institutes, and all kindred institutions; and we further desire that the study of the birds should be more extensively introduced into our schools and a knowledge of their habits and their value spread among our young people, by all practicable means, and thereby assist in the enforcement of the already efficient laws now in existence."

DURING the past three months some important results in bird protection have been accomplished by members of the Union working in conjunction with the Protection Committee. Early in March a notice appeared in a Philadelphia paper giving details of a contract between certain parties in Delaware and a commission house in New York, by which the former were to procure and ship to the latter 20,000 bird skins for millinery purposes. The Chairman, Mr. Stone, in company with Mr. Poole, President of the Delaware Game Protective Association, visited Governor Tunnell of Delaware, and found him to be enthusiastic on the subject of bird protection. He proposed to have the Secretary of State issue a warning about shooting insectivorous birds. As the Pennsylvania Railroad system controls all the railroads in Delaware, a letter was written to the President, Mr. A. J. Cassatt, calling his attention to the contract and also to the Delaware statute regarding common carriers transporting birds out of the State. A reply was received in due course of mail saying: "The attention of this Company's agents in Delaware has been called to the law to which you refer and they have been cautioned to conform strictly thereto." Mr. J. B. Thayer, Jr., General Freight Agent, issued order 'G. F. A. No. 221½' as a large poster "to be posted in two public and conspicuous places in each Freight Station: Law Prohibiting the Killing or Destruction of Birds in the State of Delaware." Then follows the full text of the law, followed by the order: "Agents

are instructed that this law must be strictly observed, and they must, therefore, decline to receive any such birds for transportation." Mr. Thayer also wrote: "We have requested the Adams Express Company to issue a similar notice to express agents, to cover service by express."

This agitation has aroused the whole State, and farmers are posting their land. The public press gave valuable aid, and it is probable that every person in Delaware now knows the reasons for bird protection. It is hoped that another Audubon Society may result.

The Union has always found the U. S. Lighthouse Board very heartily in sympathy with the work of bird protection, and it has lately issued the following order to the district officers of all the lighthouse districts on the Atlantic, Gulf, Northern Lake, and Pacific coasts: "The Board requests you to issue a circular letter to all light stations in your district cautioning light keepers against the violation of the game laws of the States in which they may be stationed, and to inculcate in them a spirit of protection, not only of the game birds, but of song birds, and of all bird life."

Our member, Mr. Abbott H. Thayer, recognizing the frightful destruction of the Gulls and Terns that has been going on for a few years past, and the immediate necessity for special protection for the small remainder, made an appeal to the public through a selected list of newspapers, for funds to be used in hiring wardens to protect the birds while nesting. Already quite a large number of subscriptions have been received by the Treasurer, aggregating \$600. Active efforts are being made to locate breeding colonies of seabirds along our Atlantic seaboard, and as fast as any are found, to obtain the services of a trustworthy and fearless warden to protect them during the breeding season. All the Massachusetts colonies of Terns are being cared for as usual this year by their devoted guardian, our fellow member Mr. Geo. H. Mackay. The Tern colony that was driven from Great Gull Island, N. Y., when it was occupied by the General Government as a site for a fortification, has gone to Gardiners Island, N. Y., where they are afforded absolute protection by the owner, Mr. John Lyon Gardiner, and Mr. F. Aug. Schermerhorn, who has the shooting rights on the island. Both of these gentlemen are ardent and enthusiastic bird protectors.

Arrangements have already been made to protect the Terns breeding in southern New Jersey, and the U. S. Lighthouse Board has issued special orders to the light keeper at the Great Duck Island Light Station, Maine, to prevent the destruction of the colony of Herring Gulls that live on that lighthouse reservation. Plume hunters and milliners' agents, having nearly exterminated the sea birds on the southern and middle Atlantic coast, have attacked our northern seaboard. Maine ornithologists complain that commercial houses in New York and Boston send agents along the Maine coast offering to purchase all the seabirds that can be killed. In one case a dealer furnished guns and ammunition to the Quoddy Indians to help on the dreadful work. In

this connection the Protection Committee consider it the urgent duty of every member of the American Ornithologists' Union, to write at once to his representative in Congress requesting him to help the passage of House Bill No. 6634, introduced by the Hon. Mr. Lacey of Iowa, which is to enlarge the powers of the Department of Agriculture, to prohibit the interstate transportation of game killed in violation of local laws, and for other purposes. It provides "that it shall be unlawful for any person or persons to deliver to any common carrier, or for any common carrier to transport from one State or Territory to another State or Territory . . . the dead bodies or *parts thereof* of any wild animals or birds, where such animals or birds have been killed in violation of the laws of the State or Territory in which the same were killed." If this bill becomes a law it will do much to stop the traffic in bird skins for commercial purposes; and it will then be necessary to have uniform bird laws in all the States and Territories. The Protection Committee therefore request that members of the Union in the several States take up the matter of local bird laws and consult with the Committee preparatory to a concerted movement in the fall and winter of 1900-01.

The New York Audubon Society introduced a bill in the Legislature in January, through Assemblyman Hallock, amending sections 33 and 39, Chapter 20 of the laws of 1900, 'Certain Wild Birds Protected,' by adding the words: "No part of the plumage, skin or body of any bird protected by this section shall be sold or had in possession for sale." There is every prospect that this amendment will become a law.

Commission houses in New York City, in their endeavor to obtain bird skins for millinery purposes, send out many circulars offering varying scales of prices for bird skins. Recently a postal card was sent by one of these firms to postmasters along the Gulf coast soliciting Gulls, Terns, Grebes, Barn Owls, etc. Our member, Dr. T. S. Palmer of Washington, brought this matter to the attention of the Hon. Jas. Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture, who at once sent a very urgent letter to Hon. Chas. Emory Smith, Postmaster General, calling his attention to this direct violation of the law. His response was quick and direct:

"Caution to Postmasters — Protest against collection of plumed birds through Postmasters.

"Post Office Department, Washington, D. C., Feb. 2, 1900.

"The attention of postmasters is called to a letter received from the Secretary of Agriculture, which is printed herewith.

"Postmasters are expressly enjoined against being parties to any transaction that violates State law.

CHAS. EMORY SMITH,

Postmaster-General."

The recent activity of dealers in bird skins for millinery purpose has thus happily done much to arouse public sentiment in behalf of the birds, and has led to renewed and successful action against their nefarious business. — WILLIAM DUTCHER.